

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15
(ISO) W

-----027582 020452Z /66-62

R 011943Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3447
INFO ALL EC CAPITALS
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BERN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, EEC
SUBJ: EUROPEAN "WORKER ACTION DAY" CALLED BY ETUC

1. WORRIED ABOUT HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND CONVINCED IT WILL
BECOME WORSE, THE EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
(ETUC), REPRESENTING SOME 37 MILLION WORKERS IN 18 WESTERN
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, HAS DECIDED TO ORGANIZE A "EUROPEAN
WORKER ACTION DAY" EARLY NEXT YEAR. PURPOSE IS TO PROD
GOVERNMENTS, INDIVIDUAL INDUSTRIAL SECTORS, AND
COMPANIES--BOTH THE ECONOMICALLY STRONG AND "THOSE IN
WEAKER SITUATIONS"--TO "TAKE MEASURES SO THAT THERE IS
A BROADLY BASED RECOVERY."

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2. DECISION ON AN "ACTION DAY" WAS TAKEN AT THE NOV. 29-
30 MEETING OF THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HELD IN
BRUSSELS, AND WAS ANNOUNCED NOV. 30 AT A PRESS CONFERENCE
CHAired BY ETUC VICE PRESIDENT GEORGES DEBUNNE, WHO
PRESIDED OVER THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN ABSENCE
OF ETUC PRESIDENT HEINZ OSKAR VETTER (STILL RECUPERATING

FROM A CAR ACCIDENT).

3. ETUC STATEMENT ON WORKER ACTION DAY, TITLED "WORKERS DEMAND CONCRETE ACTION," DID NOT SAY CONCRETELY WHAT THE ETUC PROPOSES WORKERS SHOULD DO, AND SO FIRST QUESTION AT PRESS CONFERENCE WAS: "WHAT WILL HAPPEN ON ACTION DAY?" "MUCH--OR NOTHING," RESPONDED MATHIAS HINTERSCHIED, ETUC GENERAL SECRETARY. DEBUNNE INTERRUPTED TO SAY THAT SOMETHING WOULD INDEED HAPPEN, AND SO HINTERSCHIED CORRECTED HIMSELF: "MUCH OR LITTLE--IT DEPENDS ON THE DECISION OF EACH OF OUR AFFILIATES."

4. DEBUNNE EXPLAINED THAT FINAL DECISION ON TIMING AND "MODALITIES" OF ACTION DAY WOULD BE MADE AT THE NEXT ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, FEB. 8-9 IN BRUSSELS. EXAMPLES GIVEN OF WHAT THE UNIONS MIGHT DO WERE: PROTEST MARCHES, CALLS ON MINISTERS, MASS MEETINGS, AND 15-MINUTE WORK STOPPAGES. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF A DAY-LONG STRIKE.

5. ETUC ESTIMATES UNEMPLOYMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE AT WELL OVER SEVEN MILLION PEOPLE, AND THE SITUATION, "FAR FROM IMPROVING, IS GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE," THE ETUC STATEMENT SAID. "UNLESS THE POLICIES WHICH HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED SO FAR BY GOVERNMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH HAVE BEEN BOTH INSUFFICIENT ON THE WHOLE AND ALSO OFTEN UNCLASSIFIED

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CONTRADICTORY, ARE CHANGED, THE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE THROUGHOUT 1978."

6. ETUC STATEMENT CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE ADOPTION OF "INTERNATIONALLY COORDINATED MEASURES TO EXPAND THE WESTERN EUROPEAN ECONOMY." EMPHASIS IN THE EXPANSION POLICY "SHOULD BE BOTH ON SUPPORTING AND STIMULATING CONSUMPTION, PARTICULARLY BY INCREASING LOW INCOMES, AND ON PROMOTING PUBLIC INVESTMENT IN MANUFACTURING AND IN SUCH SERVICES AS MEDICAL CARE, HOUSING, EDUCATION, AND A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT."

7. APART FROM WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO, UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS IN SPECIFIC INDUSTRIES SHOULD MEET ON THE EUROPEAN LEVEL TO DISCUSS SECTORAL PROBLEMS, THE STATEMENT SAID, AND ADDED THAT "A TOTALLY NEGATIVE OR TOO RELUCTANT ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF EMPLOYERS WILL NULLIFY EVEN THE BEST POLITICAL INTENTIONS." (ETUC STATEMENT ALSO CHARGED THAT TWO EC EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS--THE INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS GROUP (UNICE) AND THE COMMITTEE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES--ARE "MAINTAINING INFLEXIBLE AND REACTIONARY ATTITUDES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THEIR

PRIVILEGES.")

8. ETUC ALSO PROPOSED THAT A WESTERN EUROPEAN "TRIPARTITE CONFERENCE" OF LABOR, MANAGEMENT, AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES BE CONVENED "TO DEFINE A COMMON POLICY FOR RESTORING FULL EMPLOYMENT." THE MEETING, SAID HINTERSCHIED, COULD BE SPONSORED JOINTLY BY THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION (EFTA).

9. AN ETUC SECRETARIAT MEMBER PRIVATELY TOLD LABOR ATTACHES THAT ACTION DAYS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN PROPOSED BY THE ETUC'S ITALIAN AFFILIATES, WITHOUT SUCCESS, BUT THIS TIME THE IDEA CAME FROM THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF TRADE UNIONS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Format: TEL
From: BRUSSELS USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 115313
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EUROPEAN \"WORKER ACTION DAY\" CALLED BY ETUC
TAGS: ELAB, EEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/aafdcefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009